Communities in ACTION

A bimonthly magazine about the War on Poverty

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Co-ops and Capitalists in the Other America

Communities in ACTION

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4 **A Ghetto's Quest for Economic Growth**
Residents, universities, and business are building economic power for the nation's best-known ghetto.

8 **Hunger Runs a Co-op**
In Bolivar County, Miss., blacks are eating well this winter because they produced one million pounds of food last summer.

12 **A Neighborhood Does Its Thing**
Neighborhood corporation in Columbus, Ohio, seeks business profits as a means to self-sufficiency.

15 **Wild Rice and Red Capitalism**
Northern Wisconsin Indians use a co-op and modern processing to compete in the gourmet food market.

18 **Folk Hero From Houston**
A profile of George Foreman. He talks about boxing, violence, the past, the future, the Job Corps.

22 **Soul on Campus**
Black student in Los Angeles shows how community colleges are shaping a new role in helping the poor.

27 **Newsline**
West Virginia school board gives in on school lunch. Ruling opens court door to Georgia poor. Bus to suburbs helps D.C. job seekers. South Carolina project puts 700 poor in jobs.

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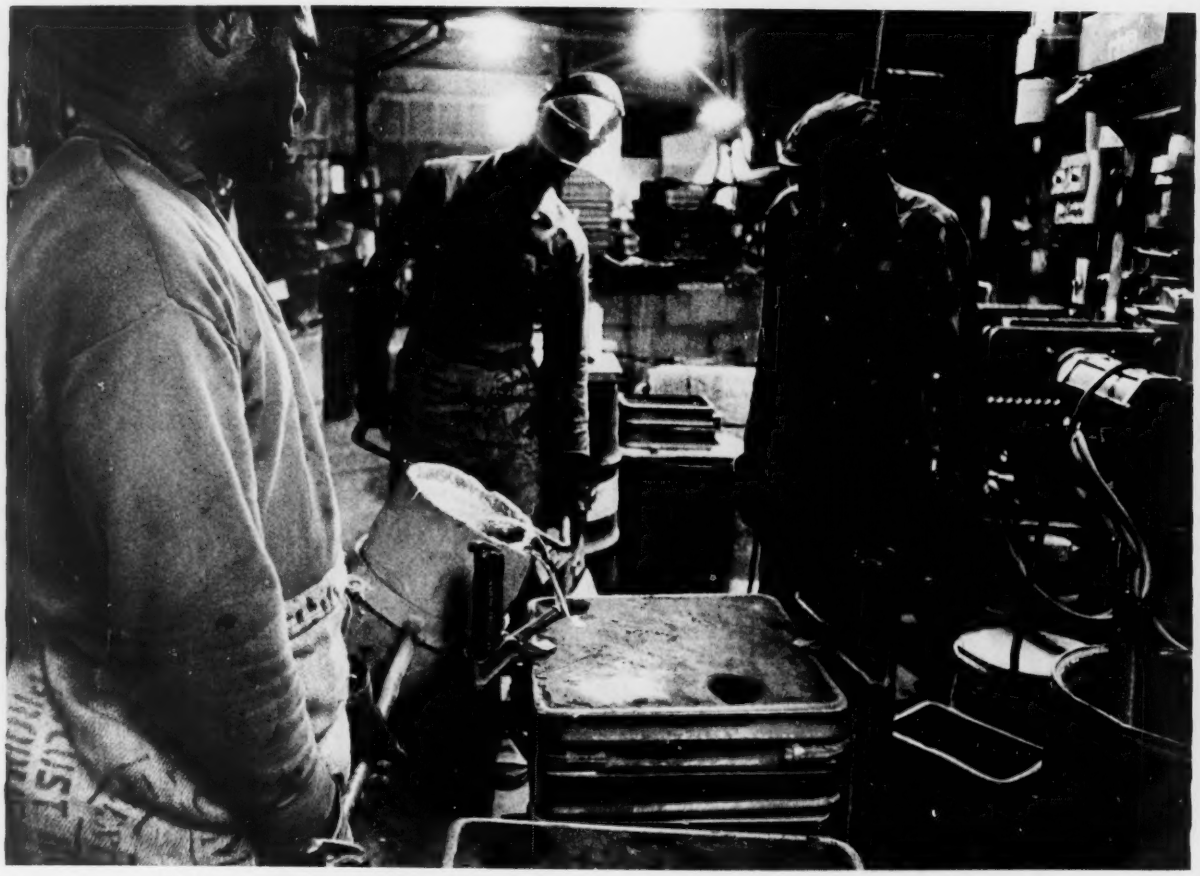
The Office of Economic Opportunity has put increasing emphasis on economic development projects. During fiscal 1969, it hopes to put $8 million to $10 million (in Special Impact Title I-D funds) into urban economic development projects. Last year, it made a $1.6 million grant to a ghetto economic development corporation in the Hough area of Cleveland. In rural America, 131 marketing co-operatives have been set up with $5.2 million in Community Action funds. They market a wide variety of farm, craft, and other products.

A ghetto's quest for economic

By Ronald P. Smolin



In poverty neighborhoods, businessmen who usually live elsewhere, own and manage virtually the whole economy. The residents spend their income in local businesses. Capital, the life blood of a healthy economy, is drained away. Millions of dollars a year in profits are taken out of and do little to bolster economic growth of an impoverished community. This continued hemorrhaging of capital is a contributing factor to the economic sickness of slum communities and, of course, to the poverty of individual families. America's slums and ghettoes are like underdeveloped countries without substantial economic activity that would offer residents a share in the ownership of goods and services. They suffer from a severe balance of payments deficit.

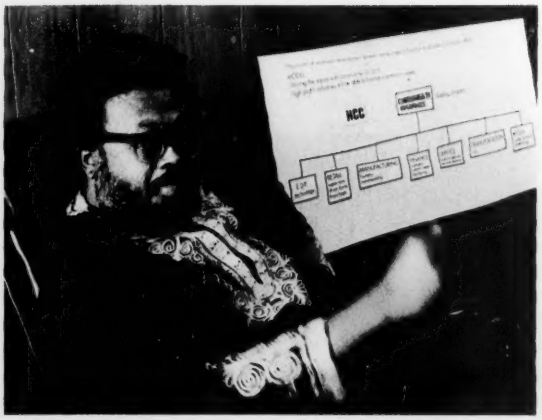
Harlem, the best known ghetto in America, suffers from a situation in which 80 percent of its 6,000 retail and manufacturing firms are owned by white businessmen who live outside the ghetto. It is a depressed area with high levels of poverty and juvenile delinquency.

In June 1967, the Office of Economic Opportunity made a $393,000 Community Action grant to the Columbia University Workshop in Development Planning to determine whether a poverty community—Harlem—could develop a meaningful economic base. It was to find whether a community-based and community-oriented economic development program could be carried out with resident participation.

With help from the universities (including the New School for Social Research), and private enterprise (the National Association of Manufacturers), the Harlem Commonwealth Council was organized. It is one of the few major ghetto economic development corporations completely controlled by black people. Although only 18 months old, the council has launched a number of promising enterprises and has learned some lessons. It is being watched closely as the most advanced economic development effort financed by the federal antipoverty program. It is demonstrating that a depressed community can take decisive measures to build its own economic base.

The HCC was organized by Roy Innis, director of the Congress of Racial Equality, who became the council's first director, and several Harlem community leaders. The 13-number board of directors includes leaders of community organizations and businessmen in Harlem.

growth



Harlem is receiving millions of federal, state, and city dollars aimed at reducing poverty. It is a newly-chosen Model Cities area. It contains two of New York's largest antipoverty corporations. It is the future site of a large multi-service center and a regional manpower program—both to be run by the city's Human Resources Administration, which includes the OEO-funded Community Action Agency. Yet none of these programs is geared to reverse Harlem's downspinning economy. Thus the HCC is plowing ground untouched by other antipoverty programs.

The director of HCC is Donald M. Simmons, 33, an articulate economist and former executive with the Phillips Petroleum Company. He is a graduate of Oklahoma State University and a native of Muskogee, Okla.

"The primary goal of HCC is to satisfy the needs of the people in Harlem by controlling the economic instruments to create wealth for them," Simmons says.

"HCC's role is to reduce the 80 percent ownership of Harlem's 6,000 retail and manufacturing businesses by white businessmen who do not live here and to redirect the wealth among Harlem residents," Simmons said.

This is what HCC has begun to do. Its grand design is to purchase and own retail and manufacturing businesses to be managed by newly-trained Harlem residents who will share in stock options and cash bonuses. Equally important, HCC will eventually offer shares of ownership to the Harlem public until the residents own from 30 to 50 percent of its enterprises Simmons said:

"Once we have reversed the ownership trend, we will have the confidence of the Harlem community to continue its growth as a commonwealth. The economic ownership by the people will serve as the lever to effect changes in Harlem's political and educational institutions. Eventually, Harlem's people will be responsible for Harlem's police protection, health services, and education."

The council's actions thus far have been remarkable. It has taken some significant steps.

Renting an IBM 360 computer, HCC is about ready to start a data processing company and training program and to sell company shares to the Harlem public within a year. HCC hopes its first clients will be the New York City hospitals, which, according to Simmons, have no way to account for the availability of hospital beds throughout the city. HCC has developed a system for them.

It served as the technical assistance link in setting up a retail children's shoe store in Harlem. With financial assistance from the New York Urban Coalition and the Green Shoe Company, HCC put a black shoe salesman into the ownership slot.

"We were the marriage broker here," Simmons said, "but HCC does not own the shoe store and thus cannot control the efficiency of the operation. Nor can we share its equity with the Harlem community.

"From this venture, we learned to turn around our economic philosophy. From then on, we were determined to control by ownership any business we helped to create," Simmons said.

The council is negotiating to purchase two large supermarkets in Harlem and plans to make them self-supporting, profit-making enterprises. Simmons said he hopes to acquire ten more supermarkets throughout New York City in the next year.

"We won't run a cooperative supermarket, because we would lose efficiency and control. Therefore, if our supermarket managers sell shoddy produce, they won't receive their stock options and cash bonuses. This way, we keep control and serve the interest of the community," Simmons said.

HCC is in the process of creating a Community Service Finance Company to offer families with income under $4,000 prompt and long-term loans at legal interest rates. HCC is now raising $200,000 to begin operating what it considers to be a vital community service. In addition, a chain of consumer credit operations is planned.

The council has almost completed plans to construct a huge automotive diagnostic center in East Harlem, to combine a service and repair operation for the public with an automotive job training program for Harlem residents. This $400,000 venture will come about as a result of HCC's negotiations with the Mobil Oil Company and the Ford Motor Company.

HCC and a major petroleum company are now working out a deal to set up black ownership for nine service stations in Harlem.

HCC has created an organization that offers 26 Harlem pharmacies short-term loans or outright purchase of their accounts receivable. This was developed because pharmacists throughout New York City had not been receiving

their Medicaid reimbursements on time from the city. Some pharmacies had to wait up to four months to be paid up to $20,000 in Medicaid payments, a severe economic hardship. The new system relieves this burden, which could put some pharmacies out of business. On its rented computer tapes, HCC has compiled the Medicaid accounts of Harlem physicians, dentists, and pharmacists to help speed up reimbursements from the city.

Because there is a serious lack of night transportation service in Harlem, the council is planning to start a fleet of taxi cabs to be operated by residents, and to be owned by the public in the form of shares.

Through the help of private enterprise and a church organization, HCC recently purchased the Acme Foundry Company in Harlem from two white owners at a cost of $110,000. The foundry, now a part of the HCC holding company, manufactures bronze and aluminum castings It does a gross business of $500,000 yearly.

The purchase prevented the possible loss of one of Harlem's few industrial employers. The company's sales had been declining and the owners lacked the capital for modernization.

The foundry purchase exemplifies the spirit of cooperation with private enterprise and other private groups that HCC has received.

The New York Urban Coalition found a major machinery maker, Abex Corporation, to determine that the foundry could be run on a competitive basis. Abex also agreed to give management assistance to the inexperienced new owners. A member of Kidder Peabody & Co., the investment banking house, did a financial analysis of the firm.

The coalition, a new organization of 160 leaders in business, labor, and social service organizations, put together an unusual loan package for the purchase. Through the coalition, the Morgan Guaranty Trust Company lent $50,000; one of the coalition's two economic development corporations, set up to help black and Puerto Rican enterprises, put up $20,000 and the Episcopal Diocese of New York provided another $20,000.

Abex Corporation arranged for the foundry's new president, Rozendo Beasely, to attend a training course given by the American Foundrymen Society.

"A lot of financial institutions say there are no businesses in ghettos worth investing in. A lot of financial institutions say there isn't enough black managerial talent in the ghetto. We want to prove this is wrong," said Beasely, a 33-year-old business administration graduate from Michigan State University.

As soon as the foundry pays its debt of $95,000, shares of it will be sold to Harlem residents at "prices they can afford," Beasely said.

HCC has also initiated a Spanish-language course for its 13-member staff. HCC is not exclusively a black operation. "It's for everyone living in Harlem who wants to have a stake in its future," Simmons said.

So far the HCC has met with surprisingly few problems. "When problems arose, we quickly overcame them—and we have nothing but the best economic minds from businesses and universities in New York on our side to help solve these problems," Simmons said.

The New School for Social Research examined possible investment fields, such as the need for an auto diagnostic center. The Center for Independent Action of the National Association of Manufacturers was instrumental in exploring specific investment possibilities in promising fields. Columbia University did basic economic research on consumer spending patterns, income levels, and credit problems. The Architects' Renewal Committee in Harlem did a survey of the available space in Harlem and did the design for the proposed auto diagnostic center.

The council has demonstrated that building a viable neighborhood economic base is more than just a dream for poverty communities. Simmons is optimistic about his program's chances for success.

He believes that a combination of residents, business, universities, and government working together can restart a stalled community. He believes that economic development can transform the faces of depressed neighborhoods.

—— *Ronald Smolin is a writer on the public affairs staff of the New York City Human Resources Administration.*

HUNGER

By COLMAN MCCARTHY

In April, 1967, a Senate subcommittee on poverty went to Jackson, Miss., for public hearings on the starvation issue. Some Senators, knowing that it wasn't really "an issue" at all but a crime, gave an extra push to travel 100 miles northwest to Bolivar County—the Nation's third poorest county and showplace for every misery statistic in the bureaucrat's file.

Thanks largely to Sens. Joseph Clark and Robert Kennedy, the superpoor of Bolivar County and other Delta areas were suddenly in the public's eye and conscience. It was the eye mostly, because little was done for them in following months except a few extra food stamps and the perennial "packages" sent down by the cause-minded. The Senate worked up a $75 million emergency food bill, but the House let it die; and life for the black poor in the Delta was generally back to abnormal.

Among the exceptions was the area in the northern third of Bolivar County where today the poor are beginning to get food, health care and jobs. The motor of change was the three-year-old Tufts Comprehensive Community Health Action Program, a project of the Department of Preventive Medicine at Tufts Medical School in Boston.

The main cog is the Tufts Delta Health Center, a well-built, well-equipped and well-staffed project located in a petered-out cotton field. Also instrumental is the North Bolivar County Health Association, a grouping of 12 local health associations each run by and for the rural black poor, dotted over the 500 square miles served by the health center.

The most recent addition to this machinery is the North Bolivar County Farm Cooperative. Nearly 4000 rural blacks from 900 of the hungriest families in the area were organized by the Tufts staff and local leaders to grow food for poor people on rich land.

RRUNS A CO-OP

Grow food, they said, not cotton. Grow it on pooled and not garden patches. Grow it with modern farm equipment. Grow it with an organized labor force, working for member families first, next for others too old or sick to work and last for the economic future beyond "just getting by."

In March, 1968, the cooperative planted its first seeds. In May, the co-op was funded by a one-year Federal antipoverty grant of $152,005. By late October, the people had grown nearly one million pounds of food.

To get the whole North Bolivar picture, because obviously something more than seed, soil and superlatives were at work, I recently spent some days there. A side room of a church in Mound Bayou is the office of the Tufts community organizer and co-op director, John Hatch, an Arkansas-born and Mississippi-reared Negro, an Atlanta University graduate and a Korean veteran, for ten years a community developer in Boston.

Hatch smiled and said that despite the goodness of God and the Government, the co-op had to happen. "Too many people were hungry every winter and slowly sinking into illness or death right before our eyes. For anyone poor and black in Mississippi, food is the one thing always on his mind—and rarely in his stomach."

Half of those eligible for food stamps in Bolivar County don't have the $3 to buy them. Formerly, the people got a few rations from the plantation manager, but that stopped when cotton-picking machines appeared—each capable of replacing 70 field workers—and the people were forced into day labor or off the plantations altogether. It worsened when the blacks began to vote, apparently on the logic that "if the niggers can vote, they can work."

A few unemployed used to hunt and fish, or gather wild vegetables and nuts. But now, most of the land—private and Federal—is posted. Recently, two hungry Bolivar County youths were arrested for collecting pecan nuts which had fallen on a government-owned levee. Authorities told the boys that the nuts were reserved to feed the wild deer.

Few Delta blacks have gardens or livestock around their shacks, because the white-owned cotton fields usually come to the doorstep. Welfare is not easy to get, with only 13 per cent of Bolivar's poor on the list. Even then, Mississippi welfare payments (AFDC) are sub-low: $34.55 vs. $277.20 in New York.

"So I went around the community," said Hatch. "At our first meeting, 64 people showed up—a retired agriculture teacher, unemployed tenant farmers, tractor drivers and farm workers, plus hands, plenty of them. They said they all needed food more than anything else.

> "They said they all needed food more than anything else."

"A farm cooperative came up. The idea was talked around the room that night, and in a few months, we had 158 acres, either through lease or donation. In late spring, we got the OEO money, the seed was bought and soon the people had it all underground."

The man responsible for taking it out of the ground when grown is John Brown, farm co-op manager. He is 39, the father of nine, and formerly worked for a planter for less than $1000 a year. Brown pointed to a field of mustard greens that 20 men and women were gathering. "They make $10 a day, paid in wages and food," said Brown. "In the cotton days, they'd be lucky to make that in a week."

Walking down a row of sweet potatoes, Brown said this particular field had been triple-cropped. "In May, when we started, we planted white potatoes. Six weeks later, they were harvested. Then we planted purple-top turnips. That took five weeks. And now we're in the middle of mustard greens."

In another field, where the soil was still rich despite the beating given to it by cotton down the years, double crops of peas, lima beans, string beans, sweet and Irish potatoes, melons and okra had been grown. The only crop failure was tomatoes: a summer hailstorm had ripped the growing plants from the sticks.

Brown took me to Cleveland, eight miles down U.S. 61, where the co-op —after a losing effort to fund a cannery by harvest time—had leased a cold storage warehouse and improvised a freezing plant. Twelve workers were cleaning and separating mustard greens picked earlier in the day from the field we had just left.

"It's not exactly soul food," said Brown, "but at least it's stomach food. That'll do for now." (Actually, Brown didn't know or care that greens are now in fashion as soul food among many black urban gourmets, and among many whites, also.)

> "Anybody poor enough to join the co-op who comes and says he's hungry --we'll help him get food...We'll eat this winter, everybody."

Behind Brown were the freezers where enough food had already been stashed to see each co-op family through the winter. "Anybody poor enough to join the co-op who comes and says he's hungry—we'll help him get food. We have it. Thousands of pounds. We'll eat this winter, everybody."

What Brown meant precisely was that the people will be close to eating *nutritiously* this winter. Even when there has been food in the delta—such as fatback, grits, dried beans, pork neckbone—it has rarely had the protein to keep even the dogs healthy. As for the lack of meat, milk, fish and eggs among the delta poor, Brown said that was evil sufficient for another day.

Although delta hunger and misery were well pictured two summers ago by reporters from Northern newspapers, the reality is always more brutal than the prose. For one thing, a visitor is forced to smell the stinks, like seldom-emptied spit cans, seldom-changed clothes and seldom-washed bodies.

Any shack will do. "They're all alike," said Aase Johannesen, a nurse-midwife who invited me to make the rounds with her one morning. A former Peace Corps volunteer in Honduras, Miss Johannesen operates a prenatal clinic at the Tufts Health Center in Mound Bayou, but much of her time is spent traveling the county, shack to shack.

At the first one we visited, the unofficial greeter was a bare-reared 4-year-old with a distended stomach and a popped-out umbilical knot. His legs and neck were scabby, a playground for a dozen hovering flies. In the fust behind, four more children stared at us, two of them with the appearance of retardation that comes from childhood deprivation.

Nearly every poor family in the delta has one such child, sometimes three or four. The cause is a mixture of poor diet and little stimulation. Studies abroad have suggested that lack of protein during the fetal period and the first four years when the brain reaches 90 percent of full weight causes irreversible retardation.

> "... lack of protein during the fetal period and the first four years ... causes irreversible retardation."

On the living room bed of this shack was a 15-year-old girl who three weeks before had lost her baby in the seventh month. The midwife woke her. The girl, underneath a sweat-stained blanket, rolled over and stared up numbly. The midwife bantered lightly for a few moments about "things," then asked the girl to pull up her shirt. The midwife felt both breasts, explaining that they were too hard because of poor lactation. The girl said they hurt. The midwife took some pills from her satchel and said they would do the trick.

As we left, four of the five kids who saw us come in were on the floor sleeping, the major novacaine against hunger.

After visiting two more shacks filled with the tortured, Miss Johannesen suggested that I go back with her to the Tufts Health Center, whose director is Dr. H. Jack Geiger, professor of preventive medicine at Tufts Medical School and a man of energy and grace.

"Our basic idea," said Geiger, "is that the real problems of ill health among the poor lie in the social order, but that health services can provide a point of entry for much broader and varied efforts at change. In simple English, that means we think it's foolish—even cynical—to save a baby dying of infectious diarrhea and send him home to drink more water from a drainage ditch and be infected again. We think it's futile merely to correct a young man's eyesight and not worry about whether he can get the education to learn reading and the chance for a job."

> "It's foolish...to save a baby dying of infectious diarrhea and send him home to drink more water from a drainage ditch . . ."

Geiger and his staff began clinical service over a year ago in a church parsonage, with a kitchen for a laboratory, but their most important work was out in the field—at places named Alligator, Hushpuckena and Six-Mile Lake and clusters of tumbledown shacks too small to have names. All this was a sick society—not neurotic sick, as the term is popularly applied to materialistic America, but no-doctor-sick, no-nurse-sick, no-medicine-sick.

"Conditions here," said Geiger, "are among the worst in America. In 1964 in Bolivar County, the infant mortality rate was 17.1 per live 1000 births for whites—much better than the national average. But it was 56.2 for Negroes. Mississippi has no municipal or county charity hospital. Two state hospitals are run for the poor, but the nearest is in Vicksburg, 100 miles away."

Into all this, Geiger led a team of health professionals three years ago—the majority of them black and many originally from the South—after making a series of field trips seeking a site for a comprehensive rural health center. The group was already running an urban health center in Boston's Columbia Point under an antipoverty grant, and was guaranteed funding for a rural center.

A new idea in American medicine, the comprehensive health center is designed first, to fill as many of its jobs as possible with local people, thus bringing money into the community and avoiding old-style colonial medicine.

Second, it seeks to treat all the health needs of the poor patient. Unlike the rich, the poor tend to show up with three, four or more ailments. One man's flesh in the delta can easily support cases of bad teeth and gums, glaucoma, malnutrition and tuberculosis. Most public health clinics are able to treat one or two of these, but for the third and fourth sickness, the poor get the "that's another department" brush. Often the patient never gets to the other department, and his glaucoma or TB stays with him.

As to whether the comprehensive idea is working out in Bolivar County, a number of signs suggest that it is: the crowded waiting room, the 16-hour days put in by the staff and the range of diseases being prevented or treated.

The Tufts Health Center is staffed by four primary physicians, a surgeon, a psychologist, seven community health nurses, two nurse-midwives, three social workers, a sanitarian and over 100 others—mostly local—in professional and subprofessional jobs.

"Surprisingly," said Geiger, "recruiting top-flight staff, while hard, is not impossible. We got doctors and nurses interested in using medicine not just to restore health but to restore society. Once you get a health professional here who wants medicine to be more than just medicine—well, you have to scramble to make it possible for him to do all the creative things he'd like to do."

Individually, Tufts staff members have their own motives and rewards for working in Bolivar County, but as a group, they are responsible for a first in Mississippi: the poor and the black can now, with neither difficulty nor money, see a doctor before they get sick—not after.

As to why that *before* has gone on unchecked year after year in the form of delta hunger and disease, the reasons are easily pinned down. Dixie politics and white land-lust head the list. Although all the worst things about Mississippi have been endlessly revealed—to the self-righteous point that many in the North still use Mississippi as the handiest goat to scape—this revelation has not produced great change.

"The only difference," said a Bolivar sharecropper, "between me and my boy is that I was born a nigger and he was made a nigger. That's progress to some people, but not to me."

One veteran civil rights worker said, "The civil rights fight has been won on paper, but that's the only place it's been won." He pointed out that many Northerners thought that the Voting Rights Act of 1965 would automatically "change things" in Mississippi. "Since 68 per cent of this county was Negro, the conclusion was that we could control any county elections we wanted. That sounds good, but it works bad.

"For one thing, many Negro voters can't see any good in controlling an election between a moderate racist and a semimoderate racist if they're the only candidates running. Negroes lose both ways. Then there's the uppityness issue. When a Negro living in a shanty goes down to vote, the white landowner might throw the black man off the land. He was uppity."

John Hatch said the North Bolivar co-op could use 400 more acres than the present 158.

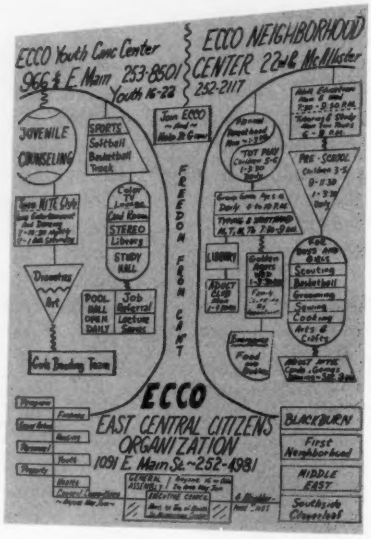
"The problem is, we can't get it. Even the land we now have under cultivation is either loaned or leased by the year. Right away, we're against the wall. We need an irrigation system for a starter, but what's the sense in putting in one when the land might be taken away when the lease is up?"

Coincidentally, the day Hatch told me this, the Ford Foundation, in a major policy shift, announced that it was putting up capital for social programs among the poor. "There is no area of our work," said McGeorge Bundy, "in which this procedure might not be relevant," from family planning centers to farm cooperatives. Word of the North Bolivar County Co-op must have filtered in.

But no one in Bolivar County is banking on the foundation. What is largely true about poverty in general holds for Bolivar poverty in particular: the poor go for help to the poor. It isn't bootstrap help—only the upper-class poor own boots and straps—but backbreaking help, because as this summer and fall showed, there are plenty of backs in Bolivar County willing to risk breaking rather than be broken by hunger and hate. By luck or Providence, this is one Mississippi area where the blacks have a choice.

The preceding story is reprinted with the permission of the Washington Post. Colman McCarthy is a writer with the Office of Economic Opportunity and was a special assistant to Sargent Shriver when he was the director.

a neighborhood does its thing



By Jim Jaffe

ECCO is a credit union and family planning advice. ECCO is a day care center and legal aid. It is a youth center and sewing classes and adult education and housing rehabilitation. ECCO is what the people who live in a 40-block area of Columbus, Ohio, want it to be.

It sounds like just another neighborhood center, but there's a vital difference. It is a neighborhood corporation completely controlled by area residents. Spelled out, it is the East Central Citizens Organization.

ECCO is operated by a 30-member executive council elected by the group's 1500 members. It works in a black and white neighborhood where four block clubs joined together in 1964 to take over a social service agency that had previously been operated by a local Lutheran church. In 1966, it became the first neighborhood corporation to receive OEO funds.

But it has not been entirely dependent on OEO for financial aid. It has also received support from the Lutheran Church of America, the Stern Family Fund, the Columbus Council of Churches and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Despite this aid, ECCO members know the pitfalls of having their programs linked to government or philanthropic agencies. Support for programs would grow or decline on the basis of outside political forces rather than on the basis of what the community wanted. So they are drafting a plan that will put the neighborhood corporation into private enterprise.

Profits will be used to support ECCO programs.

OEO made a $202,910 grant in August 1968 to enable ECCO to begin a self-sufficiency program. Although ECCO took more than four months to purchase its first business, one enterprise was going within a month.

It is a sewing shop operated by Ruthel Tyler. Located in the basement of the First English Lutheran Church along with other ECCO programs, the cramped sewing room houses five machines of indeterminate age that Mrs. Tyler has collected.

Some days two or three women drop in to sew. Sometimes no one comes and Mrs. Tyler works by herself, making the tote bags and throw pillows that ECCO markets in the Columbus area.

Scraps from the bags are used to make throw pillows. And scraps from the pollows are given to ECCO members who want to make quilts.

The program, while raising money for ECCO, also gives residents a skill which can help them get regular jobs. Mrs. Tyler, who is looking for money to pay trainees, says women can earn $90 a week in a neighborhood tie factory once they learn how to sew well.

Since Mrs. Tyler joined ECCO she has also become something of a community leader. Last summer she led a group of parents who convinced the Columbus School Board to continue operating a special summer program for emotionally disturbed children.

For many residents, involvement with ECCO has led to active involvement in community affairs. As a result of

ECCO efforts a school intersection has been made safer by a crossing light; street cleaners entered the neighborhood for the first time in residents' memory. The city has also been pursuaded to consult the neighborhood on proposed zoning changes.

Then there's the case of Mrs. Marian Craig, a former ECCO executive council secretary. In May 1967, she led a group of parents in demanding that the Columbus public schools let parents know how their children scored on achievement tests. Grades were likely to be misleading, she said. Her son got good grades, but he was two years behind in math and reading.

When school re-opened in September, Mrs. Craig, as the Ad Hoc Committee for Quality Education, led the group in a boycott of an elementary school in the ECCO area. The parents wanted a voice in school policy, better teachers, a lunch program and other reforms. As a result, the Board of Education began seriously bargaining with the group.

The education group grew out of ECCO and when ECCO took a poll of what its members were most concerned about in the neighborhood, education ranked high. Other major concerns were:

- Day care. ECCO operates a day care center for more than 60 pre-school children in the church basement. It enables mothers to take regular jobs. Parents are charged $3 a week per child for the food. There is a long waiting list.
- Employment. ECCO has a file of jobs available in the area and the group has applied for federal funds to operate a regular job training and placement program.
- Economic development. This will be started when the self-sufficiency program goes into full operation.
- Housing.

The more than 8000 people who live in the ECCO area have more than a little dilapidated housing in their midst. An old German neighborhood until World War II which is now about 80 percent black, the area is a collection of large brick and shingle homes.

ECCO is trying to stabilize the housing situation by making sure that a supply of good housing is kept on the market.

Workmen are putting the finishing touches on a house and small store on Champion Ave. that ECCO bought and rehabilitated.

The day the director was explaining ECCO's activities a woman walked into the office and offered to sell him five houses for $24,000. "As people find out we're interested, they come to us," he says.

ECCO also is considering the purchase of an eight-unit apartment building that is in good condition.

If these structures meet code requirements, the Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority will guarantee occupancy and the payment of rent for 15 years. ECCO can then use this commitment to borrow money to purchase this and other buildings. Profits from rentals will be used to finance ECCO programs.

This is one part of the economic development program.

In buying properties for economic development, ECCO has decided to stick to businesses already operating within its area and sell services to neighborhood residents. This is an effort to keep capital within the neighborhood community.

"There is $6-million worth of income in this area," said David McBride, a former business executive who directs ECCO's economic development programs. Yet most businesses in the area are absentee-owned, he said.

ECCO Executive Director James Cooper explained the emphasis on acquiring operating businesses this way:

"it's the easiest route and the most favorable . . . you don't run the risk of loss the first year."

Many of the older white storeowners are getting out of the neighborhood. They are ready to retire and their children don't want to take over the businesses. So they must sell.

McBride carefully investigates each offer. His first planned purchase was a small supermarket near the ECCO office. But he wanted to find someone to manage the store before he bought it. If the new manager showed promise he would not need to have a high school diploma, McBride said, and could earn up to $9000 a year in salary and bonuses. A profit-sharing plan will give 50 percent of the profits to the store's employees.

The economic developer is also thinking about purchasing service stations and restaurants. But he is taking one step at a time. He does have a dream, however, of ECCO's business effort, ECCO Enterprises, growing to a point where it can operate a factory or a shopping center.

Before these plans bear fruit, money must be raised to buy the first businesses. The portion of the OEO grant for investment will supply only part of the capital needed. Residents will be invited to invest, but probably will be unable to supply the major share of the money. The rest would come from private investors.

Cooper believes that some of the more affluent people in Columbus might invest in ECCO's business venture. Whatever the amount that is raised from outsiders, they will not be allowed to control ECCO Enterprises, Cooper and McBride say.

Several recent incidents show the perils faced by a neighborhood corporation when it is not financially independent.

In June the Youth Civic Center, an ECCO-affiliated project that provided some 600 members with a dance floor, study hall, library and color television lounge, was closed when funds ran out. The program had been funded as a demonstration by the Office of Juvenile Delinquency of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

The demonstration was over, HEW said, and no more funds were forthcoming. The center has been closed since summer.

Some months later the neighborhood center program, including the day care program, adult education, senior citizens meetings and sewing classes, was in a bind. The program is funded by the Columbus Metropolitan Area Community Action Organization, the local CAA, was curtailed when it was suddenly informed it had overspent its budget. ECCO was forced to dismiss part of its staff and move the administrative offices into the same building that houses the classes.

The neighborhood agency would like to rehire the displaced employees. But it will be a while before it can generate enough cash to do so.

Despite this, the pioneering neighborhood corporation has come a long way from its first project in 1964—an anti-rabies campaign to protect neighborhood dogs and cats who were under attack from the local rat population.

"One of the most successful of the pioneer Neighborhood Development Corporations is ECCO. . . . First organized as a neighborhood foundation to receive funds to run its own community center, ECCO has become an economic and political force in Columbus. With ECCO residents of a blighted area have demonstrated their ability to control and manage their neighborhood and lives with great success," said Gen. James Gavin in his book, "Crisis Now."

If ECCO has similar success in managing its businesses, it may create a pattern for other neighborhood agencies that would like to become financially independent.

Wild Rice and Red Capitalism

The Indians of northern Wisconsin still harvest wild rice the old way—in canoes. But the processing methods developed by the Chippewa and Sioux will soon go out of style as the Indians adopt modern methods in order to compete with more sophisticated businessmen seeking to exploit the growing demand for wild rice as a gourmet food.

After several years of watching the efficient competition, the Community Action Program of the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council, Bowler, Wisconsin, decided that the Indians would have to modernize if their stake in the rice business was to continue. The processing will be done by the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Cooperative formed with the help of Joseph Porcarelli, an economic development specialist with the council.

The co-op hopes to locate enough money to have the new methods in operation when the harvest begins in August, 1969.

Indians in canoes float through the rice, stroking the stalks between two sticks, allowing the immature rice to remain on the plant while the ripe kernels fall into the boat. Previously the rice was put out in the sun to dry, then slowly cooked in iron pots over a wood fire. They will be replaced by

scorchers that can dry 40 lbs. of rice in 40 minutes. Threshing was done by putting the rice in a pail and walking on it to separate the rice from the hull. The new threshing machinery will do in a day what it would have taken 1500 Indian men a week to do. Cleaning machinery will do in a day what was a week's work for 1200 Indians. No longer will Indian women throw the rice up in a breeze to let the chaff slowly float away.

New packaging equipment and salesmen will enable the Indians to get a better price. They will try to sell directly to large stores in the cities.

The co-op has asked the OEO for $200,000 for the project. Part of this amount would be used to buy the necessary machinery, the rest, to buy the rice crop from the people who harvest it so they will not have to wait until after processing for their money. Their plant will start this fall with 25 to 35 people employed for three months of the year. About 7000 Indians in ten tribes are eligible for membership (fee: $1) in the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Cooperative. If the plan works and the gourmet demand for the rice continues to drive the price up, the Indian capitalists could do quite well.

FOLK HERO FROM HOUSTON

By Betty L. MacNabb

A rundown four-room duplex on bumpy, unpaved Dan Street in Houston's dilapidated old Fifth Ward seems an unlikely place to find America's newest folk hero.

But it is the home of George Foreman's mother, Nancy, and it was here that the Olympic champion came to spend his leave and ponder his future as a boxing pro. Newspapers, magazines, and television have beaten a path to this door, through dust and sometimes mud.

He is big, black, and beautiful, this 19-year-old junior high school dropout who joined the Job Corps and made the world his oyster with his outsized fists.

George Foreman is also gentle, soft-spoken, good-natured, and polite, and he obviously adores his mother who is all of these things.

How is it, then, that Forman turns into such a tiger in the ring?

He grins a little sheepishly as he settles back on the couch, his long legs protruding half the width of the small living room. Besides him is a table containing his AAU trophy, other trophies, his prized Job Corps Award of Achievement. Foreman carefully removes the gold Olympic medal from the AAU statue and swings it around his neck on its blue ribbon.

"Well, the way I figure it, we all got some violence in us somewhere, and it's gonna come out some time. I guess we're lucky, us guys that get into athletics . . . . we don't have to be violent no other way.

"This violence, it's a funny thing . . . it's kinda scary, the way it gets away from you." Foreman pauses, his face sober.

"I got to admit, I even scare myself sometimes," he says suddenly. "When I see myself hitting a guy who's already going down. . . ."

He talks on, slow and easy and unselfconscious. His face is pensive, thoughtful, grave but it lights up suddenly with a warm smile or a delighted grin.

"It wasn't a planned thing . . . I just wanted them to know how proud I was that America had the champion, how proud I was to be an American."

George Foreman was born in Marshall, a little town in the piney woods of deep East Texas. It is an area more Southern in its outlook and its speech patterns than other parts of Texas, where residents prefer to be called Western. Foreman's soft drawl might have come from across the river, from Louisiana.

George was the fifth of seven children, four boys and three girls. The Foremans were poor, dirt poor, as are most Negro families in East Texas, and jobs were scarce. When George was nine months old, his father gave up the struggle to feed so many hungry mouths in the little town, and they moved to Houston.

There the father found a job as a railroad construction worker. Nancy, the mother, hired out as a cook for a white family in another part of the city. George and his brothers grew up in the impoverished Fifth Ward neighborhood where they still live.

"I guess we had some pretty hard times, back along the way. But I don't like to think about them now, I like to think about the good things . . . . the good times we had when we were kids," he says earnestly.

He attended the Atherton Elementary School with his brothers and sisters, and then entered E.O Smith Junior High. He got as far as the ninth grade before he decided to quit and get a job to help support his mother and the younger children. By that time, his father and mother had separated and Nancy needed help.

But Foreman couldn't find a job. His limited education outweighed his obvious physical strength where employers were concerned.

"So I just sorta bummed around for awhile . . . but that wasn't no good. I had been hearing these TV commercials about Job Corps, but I wasn't really thinking about that until one day I talked to a counselor at the Employment Commission. He said I oughta get in Job Corps.

"So then I came home here, and talked to my mother. See, we've always been real close, my mother and me, and I always talked to her about what I'm gonna do. She don't pressure me, but she always understands. So when I talked to her about Job Corps, she thought it was a real good idea. She always wanted me to get some more education and be somebody. So I went on down and joined the Job Corps," George explains, smiling warmly at mother Nancy.

The Job Corps sent George Foreman to Fort Vannoy Conservation Center in Oregon for his initial training. George was just 16 years old, and he had never been out of Texas, and only rarely away from Houston. He didn't like Oregon; the grandeur and loneliness of its scenery scared him. He was homesick; he missed his mother and his brothers and sisters.

"I didn't want to stay . . . . sometimes I thought I just couldn't stand it up there any more. But I persuaded myself to stay on, to give it a chance, 'cause I knew my mother would want me to stay and get some education."

After six months of outdoor work and basic education, George graduated from the conservation center to the urban Parks Job Corps Center in Pleasanton, California.

"That was much better, and besides by then I had gotten real interested in boxing. I thought maybe if I was any good, I could make it my profession, you know."

What happened after that is by now legendary, a story featured on sports pages all over the country. The tall

"Everything I am I owe to the Job Corps–my education, my boxing, everything . . ."

teenager from Texas took on all the fistswingers the Job Corps had to offer, and slaughtered them all. His coach, Charles "Doc" Broaddus, told him he had a future in boxing, and entered him in the San Francisco Golden Gloves Tournament. Foreman won the tournament.

Meanwhile, he was finishing his Job Corps training. He graduated in June of 1967, and came back to Houston where he took the G.E.D. test for high school equivalency, and passed it. He looked for work again, but found nothing that would allow him to continue his road work and ring training.

Doc Broaddus kept in touch, and when he learned that Foreman couldn't find athletic employment, he asked him to come back to the Parks Job Corps Center as the athletic instructor. Foreman continued training under Doc, who had his eye on the national AAU tourney in Dayton, Ohio, in April, 1968. George Foreman won that one, too.

After that, there loomed the summit—the Olympic Tournament in Mexico City in October. George Foreman scaled that summit, outboxing the Soviet Union's champion for the title and the gold medal.

"That was the proudest day in my whole life . . . . that Russian was good, he was very, very good. All I could think about in the ring was that I just had to get around him, that I had to give it all I had."

And when he realized he had done it, he had won the match, there were tears in his eyes and George Foreman impulsively snatched up a small American flag that belonged to his trainer, and waved it to the crowd triumphantly.

"It wasn't a planned thing . . . . I just wanted them to know how proud I was that America had the champion, how proud I was to be an American," Foreman recalls.

His unexpected and patriotic gesture made him an instant hero to an America saddened and torn by assassinations and riots; newspapers, commentators, ministers in churches heaped praise upon this youth who unashamedly wanted to show that he loved his country.

Foreman and his mother flew to Washington to receive the Job Corps' first Award of Achievement.

"That was a really great day," he says. "Everything I am, I owe to the Job Corps—my education, my boxing, everything. They really treated me great in Washington, too. They brought my mother up there with me, gave her her first plane ride, and then let her see them giving me honor. She was really proud."

What now for the pride and prize graduate of the Job Corps?

"Well, I'm going on back to Pleasanton to my job at Parks Center for now. And I'm going to enroll in one of the junior colleges out there, to get some more education while I continue my training, my boxing.

"Then, when I think I'm ready, I'm going to turn pro. I'd sure like to shoot for the world's heavyweight title. I'm sure going to try," says George Foreman.

And the interviewer leaves with the strong impression that Job Corps someday may have a proprietary interest in the world's heavyweight boxing crown.

Betty L. MacNabb, a former reporter with the Houston Post and the Charleston (S.C.) News and Courier, is an information officer with OEO regional office in Austin, Texas.

By Marilyn Waits

"Sure I'm working with the college administration, but it's okay. I don't have to put on a false coat at work. I'm not a violent cat. I don't dig violence. Confrontation is the last resort

Soul on Campus

when there's nothing else to turn to.

There's an easier way to get change."

The speaker, John Buchanan, 27, is president of the Black Student Union at Los Angeles City College (LACC). For him militancy doesn't mean battles. In a time of tense confrontation between students and administration elsewhere, the two groups are working together at LACC.

The easier way Buchanan spoke of is a new experiment using sophmores from inner-city backgrounds to counsel in-coming ghetto freshmen in an attempt to cut down the dropout rate. The program is one of four OEO-sponsored projects in urban community colleges. All four are exploring new ways for the community college to meet the adult education needs of the poor.

The Los Angeles program has won the support of the Black Student Union. In fact, the neighboring Black Student Union at the East Los Angeles campus was so impressed that it asked for a similar program there.

John was one of the original fifteen student counselor assistants chosen in the spring of 1968. The idea was to meet the shortage of professional counselors by training students to work with ghetto freshmen whose adjustment to college life is often so difficult they flunk out before they quite understand how the system operates.

Peer counseling has worked at LACC. It has shown that a new student is less likely to hide his problems when he is dealing with someone his own age.

Buchanan pointed out what especially appealed to him about the program. "This helps solve the alienation here. LACC is non-residential, and we face real problems in making the student feel he belongs here. The counselors have given the new black students on campus a sense of belonging."

He is aware his role as a representative of the college places a strain on him that wouldn't exist if he were involved only in a black organization.

"Now we're employees of the establishment. Whom do we owe allegiance to?"

"To the students," is his own definite answer, but the program has broadened his understanding of what the college problems look like from the other side. "It's been a great education. This project has given me an insight into the administration. I see how things get hung up in bureaucratic procedures. I never realized so much red tape was necessary to get something done."

Empathy has grown within the student counselor group. The black, Mexican-American, and white students in the student counselor corps have taught each other. "Since I've been in this group," he said, "I've learned how to get along with others." The six-week orientation last spring became a sensitivity training session for everyone. To help the counselor assistants begin thinking in terms of the whole group rather than just their individual viewpoints, the professional counselors used role-playing, where they reversed positions and had the students interview them.

As a boy in Chicago, Buchanan experienced the hazards and hang-ups of growing up in the ghetto. After high school, he spent two years at Southern Illinois University, working part-time to support himself. "I chose the college where my friends went, and there were too many distractions. Finally I decided to come out to California so I would be alone and could concentrate on school. Besides, I'd heard that the state colleges in California were cheaper. LACC had a good reputation for a lot of Ph.D.s on the faculty."

With a major in social psychology, Buchanan hopes to transfer to UCLA. "I've really become interested in history, and I've got just about enough courses to minor in it. I'd like to go on to grad school, in law if I can, but in some kind of community service if not."

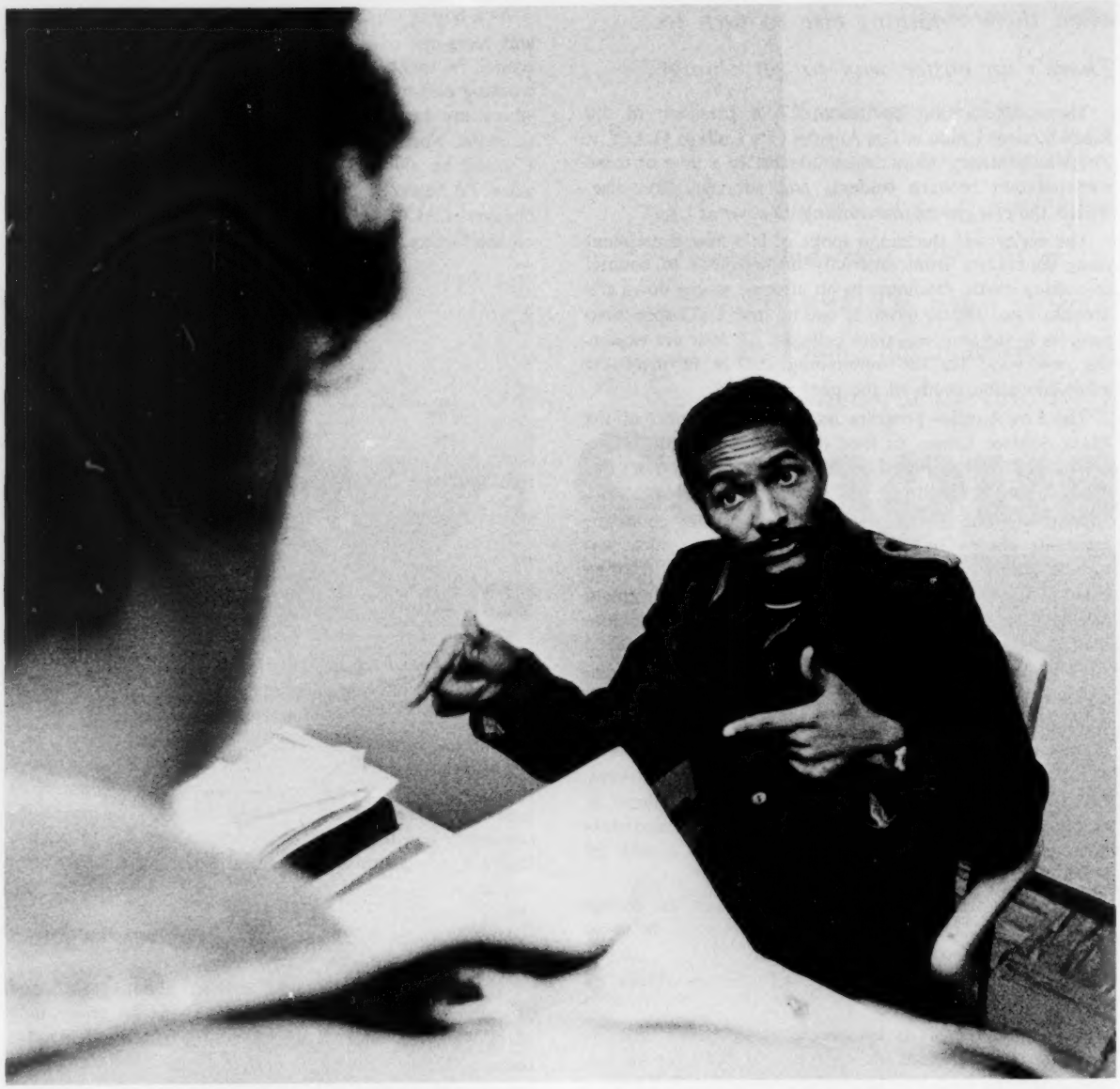
The counselor assistant program is more than just a job to Buchanan. "This work is a sacrifice for most of us financially. We could get better-paying part-time jobs elsewhere, and for a college student money has to matter. But we care about this program. Some of us had been trying to do some of these same things on our own, but this is better."

How does he fit his work with the counselor project into his role as B.S.U. president?

"I've learned all the information about grants and scholarships that makes it easier for me to really help black students take advantage of what's available for them." The dialogue between students and administration has cleared the air for better understanding of each other's goals. "Some administration members seem more open because of the program. Most of them aren't sensitive to the needs and aspirations of blacks, but through dialogue we're getting somewhere.

"We're working toward several goals this year for B.S.U. We want a permanent facility on campus to house B.S.U. and the Mexican-American Student Association. We would use it to set up a tutorial program and run the housing project which is seeking living quarters for minority students nearer the campus.

"We're also concerned about the student newspaper. We want to see more students hired to work on it, and we're concerned that blacks are not given the representation they merit in the paper. We have 2,928 black students



out of a total of 10,725 on campus, and we're trying to get our own newspaper."

The proposed paper would focus on literature about the community in which the black students live, as well as poetry, fiction, non-fiction, history, opinions, and current event discussions. John has been appointed to a committee investigating how newspaper funds from the school budget will be spent this year.

The counselor assistants have provided the liaison to carry student thinking to the administration on many matters. A health course, for example, was changed to include relevant problems like drugs and sex education when administrators learned how dissatisfied students were with the old course.

Some of the counselors have also become more active in student government. Three of them ran in student elections last spring and are serving this year on the Executive Council.

During the summer of 1968, a second group of counselor assistants joined the program. The original group helped select the new students, bringing the total number to 23. The training period was cut in half this time since the initial problems of getting the program underway had been solved.

Weekly staff meetings with Project Director Claude Ware hash out problems and situations where the counselor is uncertain what advice to give. Serious problems are referred to the college counselors.

At registration last fall, student counselors helped incoming students plan schedules, explaining why certain courses were required or how a student could make up a deficiency. One new student said, "I was especially happy while struggling with my program to see at least five student counselors I knew. They made me feel ahead of the other students who were swept away by all the confusion. I personally directed seven people to see the student counselors."

The counselors also work with the college placement office to find jobs for the students they work with. As part of the project, the college is trying to locate jobs that will complement a student's field of study, so that he can advance on the job as he learns. Counselor assistants also contacted faculty members after the first five weeks of school to learn which of their freshmen were having difficulty in class. By catching problems early, the counselors hope to raise students' marks.

Sometimes ghetto students simply lack the confidence to do well. Freddie Martin another B.S.U. member and a counselor assistant pointed out the jobs the assistants can have in overcoming that fear in their counselees:

"Ghetto kids are brainwashed by their parents to think that the school counselor knows what's best for you—just accept his advice. But it doesn't work. I found that high school counselors too often had low expectations for black kids. 'How good are you with your hands?' If a kid gets this attitude at school, of course, he's not going to try for something better."

Freddie remembers their visits accompanying the college counselors to ghetto high schools last spring. "The kids crowded around us after the meeting. They were really eager to ask questions, I guess because they could relate to us and it was informal. There's the psychological factor. Sometimes it's no one's fault, but black kids simply can't relate to middle-class white counselors."

Jim Ross, a white pre-law student in the program, admitted that being a counselor taught him to listen more and talk less. He learned to react to a student's problem objectively.

"The college expects to learn as much from the program as the students involved have," said Mrs. Hope Powell, Dean of Development. LACC expects to get a better grasp of the real needs of ghetto students.

Community colleges in New York, Chicago and Oakland, Cal. are gaining similar insights in projects aimed at adults beyond college age.

Adult education for the urban poor is a crucial need. There are 5.3 million poor people in the United States from ages 22 to 64 who are heads of families with 23 million dependent wives and children. Another 2.4 million poor people between these ages have no dependents but must support themselves. In both groups educational deficiencies prevent people from obtaining jobs or gaining promotions.

Community colleges are a new source of help. They are the fastest-growing academic institutions today, increasing at an average of one or two a week. Because they are not mired in traditional ways, they have the flexibility to

After earning a masters degree in teaching at Yale, Marilyn Waits taught in secondary schools in New York State and Arlington, Virginia. She joined the OEO as a writer in the summer of 1968.

develop new approaches to adult education. In many states community colleges can put new courses into operation in two to six weeks.

This means that they can respond quickly to community needs. Already half of their enrollment is in non-degree programs, and they can provide the short-range courses that a poor community may request—consumer education, basic reading, high school equivalency preparation. The biggest advantage is that community colleges already enroll many adults beyond college-age, adults who would be ashamed to take similar courses in elementary and high schools.

In Oakland, Cal., the Peralta College District is experimenting with three different programs bringing the colleges into closer contact with poverty communities. Students at the two campuses, Merritt and Laney, are working part-time in various neighborhod programs at the request of the local groups. Projects range from tutoring to assisting a credit union or food-buying club. Since the students are from the neighborhoods they serve, the program is making them better acquainted with their own communities and training them for leadership roles.

Besides assigning the students to individual projects, the community has also had responsibility in the two other components of the Peralta project. An advisory council, composed of community residents, chose the 30 poor adults who entered Merritt and Laney in September, 1968, to work toward two-year degrees in public service fields. The community is also being polled to determine what courses it wants offered in the local neighborhoods. The college is establishing several local centers where faculty, instructional materials, and equipment from the college are provided for short-term courses such as English for Spanish-speaking people.

Another OEO project, at Chicago City College, uses its students to assist poor adults in basic education classes preparing them for high school equivalency exams. As Los Angeles is trying to develop new counseling techniques, Chicago is trying to develop more effective materials for teaching illiterate adults. One man refused to read the sentence "I am a boy" until the teacher changed the sentence to "I am a man." Successful Job Corps G.E.D. materials are getting a try-out in Chicago.

The fourth program is in New York's Bedford-Stuyvesant area. The Urban Center, set up by the State University of New York in cooperation with the New York City Community College, is working with the families of 36 children enrolled in one Head Start program. The idea is to treat the adult both as a parent and wage-earner and to upgrade him educationally and vocationally for both roles. Thus parents have been enrolled in job training programs at the Urban Center, including office skills, drafting, machine repairs, and IBM keypunch. A few of the parents are enrolled in nursing programs elsewhere in New York. Besides the job training, the project is developing a series of family activities like picnics and museum trips.

From these four projects will come the models that will help other community colleges to reach out to the slum neighborhood.

NEWSLINE

CAP

Board relents on school lunches

A full year of concerted community action has finally caused a West Virginia school board to change its mind and agree to provide free school lunches for poor children.

At first the Mingo County school board said no. Finally it agreed, but disagreed with the community about where to draw the line in determining which families were poor enough to be eligible.

The campaign to persuade the board to begin the hot lunch program started a year ago. Poor people themselves were the source of the community pressure, working through the local antipoverty agency, the Mingo County Economic Opportunity Commission.

Last fall 50 members of the EOCs Education Committee began attending school board meetings to present their proposal. They asked the board to set aside funds from the Federal Elementary-Secondary Education Act to pay for the lunch program. Winter meetings throughout the county brought out 200 to 400 people to support the program. But the school board said no.

Finally, at the beginning of the new school term in September, 1968, the school board relented and agreed to begin the program. It set aside $32,600 from the ESEA funds the county receives. Then EOC learned that the guidelines the board had established would limit the program to less than one-third of the poor children in the county. The board set a standard limit of $75 monthly family income or less as the criterion for eligibility.

This meant there was no consideration given to family size. Many families in the county had incomes over the $75 limit, but with six or eight children in the family, they were still in need of the free lunch program for their children. The community argued that a sliding scale which adjusted income to the number of children in school would open the program to all needy families in the county. Through the EOC the community recommended a graduated scale that would allow a $2700 annual income to families with six children in school. The West Virginia Department of Education seconded the proposal.

But the school board still said no.

Finally, to spotlight the need for action, 2,000 children remained out of school for three weeks. During the second week of their absence. EOC offered $15,000 of the funds it administers through the Emergency Food Act to add to the board's $32,000 so that more children could be included in the program. The board rejected the offer.

At last, on October 16, the school board agreed to the sliding scale. It even raised the limit from the $2700 annual income proposed by the EOC to $3000 for a family of six. Rather than imposing a limit on the total amount to be spent for the free lunch program, the board agreed to provide for every child who qualifies under the new guidelines.

EOC Director Huey Perry reported that 1,500 children now receive the free lunches, and the program is expected to expand.

To everyone's surprise the conflict has not resulted in permanent hostility between the school board and the EOC. "In fact," said Mr. Perry, "this has been a hopeful and health sign for the county. This was the first time that the board had dealt directly with the poor. Our efforts seem to have increased the board's respect for the EOC. Even after the protracted wrangling, the board released a letter endorsing the program and actions of the EOC in the county."

The poor through the EOC also were instrumental in promoting other changes in the Mingo County schools this year. They helped the 58 school bus drivers to organize a local of the Amalgamated Transit Union and supported a five-day boycott by the drivers which won them union recognition and job security from the school board. Plans now are to organize the school janitors.

"Any victory like this," said Mr. Perry, "develops more pride in poor people and makes them feel more a part of what's going on in the county."

CAP/Legal Services

Ga. ruling opens court's door

A Georgia law that, in effect, shut the courthouse door on poor tenants faced with eviction orders has been struck down by the Civil Court of Fulton County in Atlanta.

The old law required that tenants who were about to be evicted post an expensive bond as a precondition for going to court. If they lost their case, the landlord was permitted to recover damages of double the amount originally due him.

The Atlanta Legal Aid Society, directed by Michael Padnos, defended poor tenants saying that the law violated the Constitution in that it denied equal protection to tenants, especially poor ones. Judge Osgood Williams wrote in his opinion that "The statute which requires a bond before appearing in Court is unconstitutional and unconscionable deprivation of the fundamental right to be heard where the defendant is unable to post such a bond."

His opinion also noted that 19,000 dispossessory warrants were issued by the Fulton County Civil Court in 1967 and only 13 tenants contested the action. Judge Williams said "The availability of the courts is necessarily open to all—both rich and poor alike."

The court certified its opinion as one that was important enough to justify immediate review by a higher court. The State of Georgia is appealing the case and it will probably be heard by the State Supreme Court.

NEWSLINE

Court orders hearing before cutoff

Welfare recipients must be given a fair hearing before the Welfare Department terminates payments, a three-judge federal court ruled in New York Novmber 26.

Legal Service attorneys with Mobilization for Youth won the very important decision on behalf of eight New York City welfare recipients.

In a far-reaching constitutional opinion, the court said welfare families should receive the full range of benefits provided in a fair hearing under the minimum requirements of due process. The court said that while the desire to protect public funds was justified, it had to be weighed against the "individual's overpowering need" not to be "wrongfully deprived of assistance."

It is common practice of welfare departments to terminate the benefits to a family thought to be ineligible; the family then may spend four or five months without funds while an appeal is reviewed and decided.

"The stakes are simply too high," the court said, "for the welfare recipient, and the possibility for honest error or irritable misjudgment too great, to allow termination of aid without giving the recipient a chance, if he so desires, to be fully informed of the case against him so that he may contest its basis and produce evidence in rebuttal."

OEO Legal Services Projects in California, Ohio, Iowa, and Texas have also challenged the withdrawal of welfare without a prior hearing.

Sister Loyola, shown talking with a VISTA in a New Orleans neighborhood center is one of the new breed of nuns—those who have become activists in the antipoverty campaign. In addition to supervising 14 VISTAs in the southern part of Louisiana, she directs Teacher Corpsmen in the Girt Town ghetto area (where some of the VISTAs are also assigned) and heads the Xavier University Upward Bound program. What does she do in her spare time? She uses Community Action funds for a summer recreation program.

HEW starts legal aid effort

The Department of Health, Education and Welfare has announced a new program to extend legal services to welfare recipients. The plan, which was worked out in cooperation with the OEO Legal Services office, won the support of the American Bar Association and the National Legal Aid and Defender Association.

The program, announced by HEW Secretary Wilbur Cohen, will reimburse the states that provide legal aid in civil cases for Aid to Dependent Children families. It will supply 85 percent of the funds needed until the end of fiscal year 1969 when the federal share will drop to 75 percent.

"The poor, who frequently need legal services the most, are least able to obtain them," Secretary Cohen said. OEO Legal Services Director Burt W. Griffin noted the new program would "fill in the gaps" left by the OEO program. Much of the new program will be conducted in rural areas, not how served by OEO programs," he said.

The program, which was authorized by an amendment to the Social Security Act, will complement existing OEO programs. HEW has recommended that states participating in the plan secure legal services from existing agencies. Thus in many cases, OEO Legal Services projects will provide the services and be reimbursed with HEW funds. The cost of the plan will not be known until all interested states submit their plans.

CAP/Head Start

Head Start programs looking for furniture can now turn to a poverty program group that is producing it. The new furniture is made by members of The Thumbusters Craft Assn., a new cooperative near Burlington, Vt. In its first month of operation the co-op sold $700 worth of furniture to the Burlington area Head Start program.

The furniture is made by men who earn about $5 an hour for their labor. The women in the co-op produce craft items including candles and dolls. During the Christmas season they sold $1700 worth of these items. The thirty co-op members live in a four-county area served by the local CAA.

Furniture available includes chairs, tables, jungle gyms, coat racks and bookcases. Prices range from $7.50 for the smallest item in fir to $34.25 for a bookcase made of birch. The co-op also is developing a variety of educational toys. It hopes to land a contract to supply the new Vermont kindergarten program.

Information on the furniture and other items is available from Kenneth Smith, Bristol, Vt. 05443.

CAP/Rural

Adults study in Endless Mountain

The scholar's lamp burns late twice each week at the Wellsboro Senior High School, Tioga County, Penna. To the distant accompaniment of the noise of children's game, 59 students stretch their minds to grasp the fine and fundamental points of English grammar.

The students are adults. For one reason or another, they were unable to finish high school, and they have come back to prepare for the GED Equivalency diploma test given by the State. Many of them have not done this kind of studying for several years. Others left school more recently. Characteristic of each of them, however, is a recognition of the value of a high school diploma, a frustration with his limitations, and hearty resolve to pass the test and get the diploma.

Interest in adult education was first sparked by the Endless Mountains Community Action Committee, Inc. and a group of interested people in the Wellsboro area. As the program developed, the guidance counselor at the high school was asked to give a achievement test. Most of those taking the achievement test decided they would like to work for their high school diplomas. The Tioga County Adult Education Association was formed. Committee members ordered materials, interviewed teachers, and obtained classrooms.

They planned a course of study which allows six weeks each for three subject areas. Each student pays approximately $25. The committee is holding raffles so that the expenses of those who cannot afford this amount will be covered. Also, a small scholarship fund has begun through a gift of local industry to assist those who cannot pay the full amount.

Upon graduation, these adults will be eligible for promotion or for new jobs which require high school diplomas.

The local CAA is gratified with the success of the project, according to Marsha S. Phillips, Director of Community Organization for Endless Mountains CAC, because the project was accomplished without additional funding through the mobilization of local resources.

30% of CAP funds in rural area

Thirty percent of Title II Community Action grants went rural in fiscal year 1968. Year-end summaries show $235 million was granted to rural community action agencies, Indian programs and single-purpose rural CAP agencies. Last year rural areas received 27 percent of the funds.

Migrant programs funded under Title III added another $24 million to rural CAP. Together with Title II, this represents $259 million for community action programs in rural America during the fiscal year. This is a new high figure in rural funding, and points up the rural thrust now being implemented by CAP.

Another $27 million in OEO funds went to rural families in fiscal '68 through Title III's Rural Family Loan program. Economic Opportunity loans benefited 18,000 families, with $22 million going to individual family loans and $5 million to create and strengthen cooperatives for low-income people. Farmers Home Administration administers the Rural Family Loan program.

CAP grants to rural CAAs totalled $165 million in FY 68. Indian grants were $26 million, and single-purpose agencies received $44 million.

Nine million dollars—30 percent of CAP Demonstration and Pilot program funds—went into innovative rural programs including rural economic development, older persons programs, cooperatives, housing, legal services and community organizations.

S.C. puts 700 in jobs

Melvin Dixon, 21 and the father of 2 children, was unemployed when he turned to T-Square, the job training program operated by the South Carolina Economic Opportunity Board in Columbia, South Carolina. He had been through 12th grade, but T-Square tests showed that he had gotten less than a 6th grade education.

His last job before coming to T-Square was as a service station attendant. He worked 13 hours daily six days a week. He earned about 96 cents an hour.

Melvin Dixon came to T-Square on May 6. After receiving counseling and health services, he was sent to Sumter Frozen Foods on May 20 and has worked there since. Starting salary: $1.60 an hour.

Melvin Dixon is but one among the many T-Square successes. Consider these cases:

Dorothy Connors, mother of three, previously was employed as a housekeeper earning $25 a week. She needed extensive medical and dental care and 12 teeth were extracted as part of treatment. She

was placed with the Pioneer Dress Company in Sumter at a starting wage of $1.60 an hour.

The Montgomery father and son team. Both had previously been day laborers. After training Joe Montgomery got a job with Union Carbide at $1.95 an hour and his father was placed with a restaurant. Pooling their wages, they were able to buy a new home.

"I never thought that I would ever spend a night in a house that looks like that, but now it looks like I'm gonna spend a good many in it. I hope so," said the elder Mr. Montgomery.

Other graduates work for Sears, Sumter Laundry and Cleaners, Sumter Frozen Food, and Congaree Iron and Steel Works.

The graduates and their families are not the only people to benefit from the program. The employers gain by finding help that is well-prepared.

"T-Square graduates employed by Pioneer are well trained and produce a much better quality of work than other employees without previous experience," says Pioneer's production manager.

And the entire community gains as they spend their earnings locally. This happened when the Montgomerys built their house, or when another graduate, placed on a job at Sears, abandoned the shack he had been living in and bought a new house. The building materials and appliance stores nearby also benefited from the new prosperity.

During fiscal year 1968, 477 people were placed in jobs. Their estimated first-year earnings are about $1.6 million. In four recent months, 262 people were placed who will earn more than $800,000. During the next year, T-Square hopes to place 1,050 people.

Knowing of this success, people are enthusiastic about joining the program despite difficulties. Some must travel more than 100 miles daily to the training centers. One man hitches a ride with a neighbor whose shift begins at 4:30 a.m., requiring that the trainee begin his day at 3 a.m. He arrives at the center at 4:15 only to wait until the official 8:30 opening hour.

The T-Square program, directed by Ruben L. Gray, has several components—counseling, medical and dental care, basic education and job training. The vocational training program is designed to prepare people for positions available in the region.

About 18 job skills currently are being taught. Skills most recently added include Home Health Aide, Child Care Attendant and Clerk-General Office.

As word of T-Square's success spreads, it is also becoming a bit of a tourist attraction, drawing people throughout the country interested in training the poor for employment.

CAP

CAA has own TV show

Some community action agencies will stop at nothing in the effort to reach people they can help. This was the goal when the Los Angeles CAA, the Economic Youth Opportunities Agency (EYOA), began a regular television show on its activities.

The show, called La Guerra Contra La Pobreza (The War Against Poverty) is seen for a half hour alternate weeks on KMEX, Channel 34, a Spanish-language station. Each show features a project sponsored by Los Angeles area anti-poverty agencies or a Spanish-language film on OEO activities nationally.

The guest on the premiere show was Manuel Aragon Jr., EYOA executive director, who discussed plans for the future.

Air time for the show is donated by KMEX as a public service. ". . . We are aware of the important work done by this agency. We feel that a well-informed public is vital to the success of the War on Poverty," said Danny Villaneva, KMEX public service director, in announcing the show.

Columbus gets foundation grant

The Columbus Metropolitan Area Community Action Organization has received a $28,000 grant from the Rosenstiel Foundation to aid its economic development plans for Franklin County, Ohio.

"This initial outlay of capital by the private sector represents a much needed marriage of necessity linking the private sector of the economy with the public sector for the furtherance of sound economic programs," said the CAA's Director, Curtis Brooks, in announcing the grant.

"We view economic development as being the key to progress in the community action programs," he added.

The CAA's economic development efforts are carried out by a division known as Community Industrial Development. Its planning was well underway before the grant was received. CID has been working with Franklin County businessmen in deciding what type of business to enter. As a result of these discussions, CID has won contracts to produce wood products. A new company, known as Opportunity Products, planned to begin production in February.

Bussing to suburbs aids job-seekers

Every weekday morning part of Washington's bus fleet rushes empty from the city to the suburbs to pick up passengers who work downtown. In the evening the flow is reversed as the suburbanites head home.

Meanwhile in the center city hundreds of jobless poor sit frustrated because they cannot get economical transportation out to available jobs in the suburbs.

Starting in January 1969 the empty buses were to be used to provide transportation to jobs for the poor under an experimental plan supported by the

Department of Transportation. At first service will be from downtown to a shopping center in Prince George's County, Md.

Later it will be expanded to other shopping centers in Maryland and Virginia.

The United Planning Organization, Washington's CAA, and the U.S. Employment Service will help place jobseekers in the project.

The $745,338 two-year experiment will be administered by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments which will receive $670,804 from the Department of Transportation and the remainder from the participating governments. These funds will be used to charter the empty buses. The riders will then pay a proportionate share of the charter fee—perhaps as little as 20 cents.

Currently the regular bus fare within the city is 30 cents. Rides that extend into the suburbs can cost more than 50 cents.

Detroit skills beat defeatism

Sometimes a defeatist mental attitude can keep poor people from solving their own problems. And when this happens antipoverty workers can be the catalyst that nudges such people into trying to make things better.

That's what happened in the case of Mrs. Carol Kelly of Detroit, who now types 70 words per minute and can take dictation at a speed of 120 words per minute.

Only a year and a half ago Mrs. Kelly was resigned to leading a marginal existence. She had been the head of her family for five years and on public assistance for three years.

"I felt I was useless and not smart enough—I had been out of school for about nine years and I had been on ADC for three years," she recalled.

Her attitude began to change when she talked with staff members at Detroit's St. Antoine Neighborhood Service Center, one of the antipoverty facilities operated by the Mayor's Committee for Human Resources Development. Gradually she began to work as a volunteer at the summer camp her children were attending.

After her clerical skills were discovered she worked as a clerk-typist as part of a work experience program at the center and became more interested in the world around her.

"I started bringing books to the center. I wanted to learn and do more," she said. She completed studies to give her a high school equivalency status.

In March 1968, she enrolled in a manpower program sponsored by the antipoverty agency and received clerical skills and sales training at the Detroit Institute of Commerce where she won awards for her performance on typing and shorthand tests.

"Mostly, I think what helped me was the encouragement— the good word. People at the center were behind me 100 percent. They were always right there and never let me down, not once," says Mrs. Kelly.

Miss America joins Head Start

The Southeast Kansas Community Action Program hooked a celebrity in its campaign for volunteers to work in its 12 Head Start centers. One of the new volunteers is Debra Barnes, a senior at Kansas State College of Pittsburg. Miss Barnes was also Miss America of 1968. The agency covers a seven-county area and has a Head Start program that serves 440 pre-school children.

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